



On the Range
A-3



Market Place
B-1



Golf
C-1

Lava Dogs beat the odds

Cpl. Rick Nelson
Combat correspondent

Before a combat deployment, every officer and staff noncommissioned officer has hopes of bringing back all their Marines and Sailors safely to be with their loved ones. That goal may seem unattainable to some, but 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, returned from Iraq in October with everyone they left with.

During the battalion's first deployment to Iraq during OIF I, the unit sustained more casualties than any other unit since the campaign began.

"Earlier in the year an article came out with the numbers of the most casualties during the war and 1/3 was number one," said Gunnery Sgt. Eugene Holiday, communications chief, 3rd Marine Regiment. "This was a great accomplishment because the battalion was really hurt in OIF I. It was a great way to rebound from having that reputation to now being the first unit to return home with everyone we left with."

While serving in Haditha with the Lava Dogs from 1/3, Holiday served as the battalion's radio chief.

"I think the main reason we came

home as a whole and took no casualties is because the officers and staff NCOs pushed the Marines and took the strict guidance from the battalion commander to be aware of safety at all times," said Holiday, a Jasper, Ala., native. "It was a huge issue through training, and the deployment, and from day one it was embedded into our heads that the safety of our Marines always came first."

Holiday added the battalion was always on their toes, whether they were patrolling or driving through the streets.

See ODDS, A-6



Cpl. Rick Nelson

Lance Cpl. Dustin R. Crandell, squad leader, 2nd Squad, 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company, patrols in Haqlaniyah, Iraq, looking for a weapons cache June 13, 2007, during a contact patrol.



Lance Cpl. Achilles Tsantarliotis

Food Service Marines prepare lunch at Anderson Hall here. The mess hall won best in the Corps for the second time in a row.

Anderson Hall best in Corps two years running

Lance Cpl. Achilles Tsantarliotis
Combat Correspondent

Marines are known for being the best of the best. But being best of the best in the Marine Corps two years in a row is a significant accomplishment.

Marine Corps Base Hawaii's Anderson Hall has accomplished this feat.

Anderson Hall's Commitment and dedication to the best quality of food and service won its well-earned recognition with the 2008 Major General W.P.T. Hill Memorial Awards Program award for the best military/contractor mess hall.

"We don't do it for the award," said Gunnery Sgt. Joseph Yantosca, mess hall manager, Headquarters Battalion. "We don't care about the award; we do it for the Marines and Sailors who live in the barracks and have nowhere else to go - that's our goal. That's what we do it for. If we never won anything it wouldn't matter, because those service members are why we work so hard."

Anderson Hall features more local recipes than any other chow hall in the Marine Corps, Yantosca said.

"We use as much creativity as we can to keep our menu different and to keep patronage up," Yantosca said. "A perfect example of that are the personnel that have com-

See BEST, A-7

Program assists families with injured, deployed service members' issues

Lance Cpl. Brian A. Marion
Combat Correspondent

The Navy Marine Corps Relief Society has a program allowing registered nurses to help families impacted by injuries to service members in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

The impact on families from their sons' or daughters' wounds could persist well after the wounds heal, said Ruthi Moore, director, visiting nurse program. In 2006 the visiting nurses started the Combat Casualty Assistance Program.

"Basically what combat casualty assistance does, is when your Marine or Sailor is injured and brought back for medical treatment, the visiting nurses will meet with the families and act as the middleman between them and the doctors," Moore said. "We interpret all the medical jargon the doctors may use and answer any questions they might have."

The VNs also try to stay



Cpl. Megan I. Stiner

A Marine from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, celebrates the lives of his fallen brothers and comrades by bowing his head in prayer.

in contact with families even after their service member has recuperated.

Out of the 48 visiting nurses spread throughout bases, 17 of the nurses travel to families' homes that aren't close to a base.

The VNs also assign multiple nurses to a family if they're located throughout the country.

"For one Marine we actually had three nurses for his family," Moore said. "We had one for his father, mother and grandmother who were all in different states."

The program offers more than 150 different resources for families.

See PROGRAM, A-6



Lance Cpl. Alesha R. Guard

A crowd prays during the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. ceremony at the Base Chapel Friday, in honor of the great dream he had for our nation.

Service members, civilians honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

Lance Cpl. Alesha R. Guard
Combat Correspondent

Martin Luther King Jr. is known as one of the most influential leaders of the American Civil Rights movement. Since 1986, America has honored this hero by dedicating a day to remember all he has done for it.

Marines celebrated the day at the Base Chapel Friday, through a ceremony dedicated to bringing back to life Dr. King's life-long pur-

suit of equality and justice for all.

"Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. changed our nation forever through his leadership, service and clarity of vision," said Gunnery Sgt. Tracey D. Nicholson, equal opportunity representative, Headquarters Battalion, reading the presidential proclamation for the national holiday at the celebration. "On the Martin Luther King Jr. federal holiday, we honor the lasting legacy of this

See HONOR, A-7

— NEWS BRIEFS —

Locality Pay Meeting

The Federal Executive Board is presenting a Locality Pay meeting at the Base Theater Wednesday from 1:45 to 3 p.m. The session is for GS employees. For more information, call Doris Chu at 257-1377.

Help Evaluate MCCS

Marines and spouses with children can help evaluate Marine Corps Community Services' Children, Youth and Teen Program Feb. 1-24. Headquarters Marine Corps is conducting an online survey to help leadership better understand and assess Marine and family member perceptions of the program. To take the survey, visit <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/surveys> between the survey dates. It takes about 15 minutes to complete. For more information, contact Coralie Kramer at 257-7340.

MCDP coming to Hawaii

The Marine Civilian Development Program, which helps transitioning Marines develop effective private sector skills, is coming to Hawaii June 14-19. Interested Marines within six months of their end of active service as of those dates should log onto the MCDP Web site for more information or to apply, at <http://www.marinecdp.org>. To contact the program representative, call Jeff Esposito at 257-7797

Tax Center

The Marine Corps Base Hawaii Tax Center is open. It is located in Building 279 on the second deck. The hours for the Tax Center are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday. For more information call (808) 630-8296.

Chinese Garden Closure

The Chinese Garden is closed now through Thursday for renovations. The Tennis Shop and Game Room are still open. For more information, call Normand Cote at 254-7639.

Swamp Romp

Marine Corps Base Hawaii's biggest race is just around the corner, and is currently accepting applications from participants. It is open to the public and costs \$120 per six man team. For registration, log on to <http://www.mcs.hawaii.com/cgfit.htm> to register.

Hawaii Marine Accepts Letters

Hawaii Marine invites its readers to e-mail its editor at hmeditor@hawaiimarine.com with their comments and letters. All submissions will be edited for clarity and length. Comments must be signed with a full name and a telephone number. *Hawaii Marine* also accepts news briefs containing relevant information pertaining to Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

Important Phone Numbers:

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCBH Duty Chaplain	257-7700
DEERS	257-2077

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www.mcbh.usmc.mil

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Nothing beats walking down memory lane



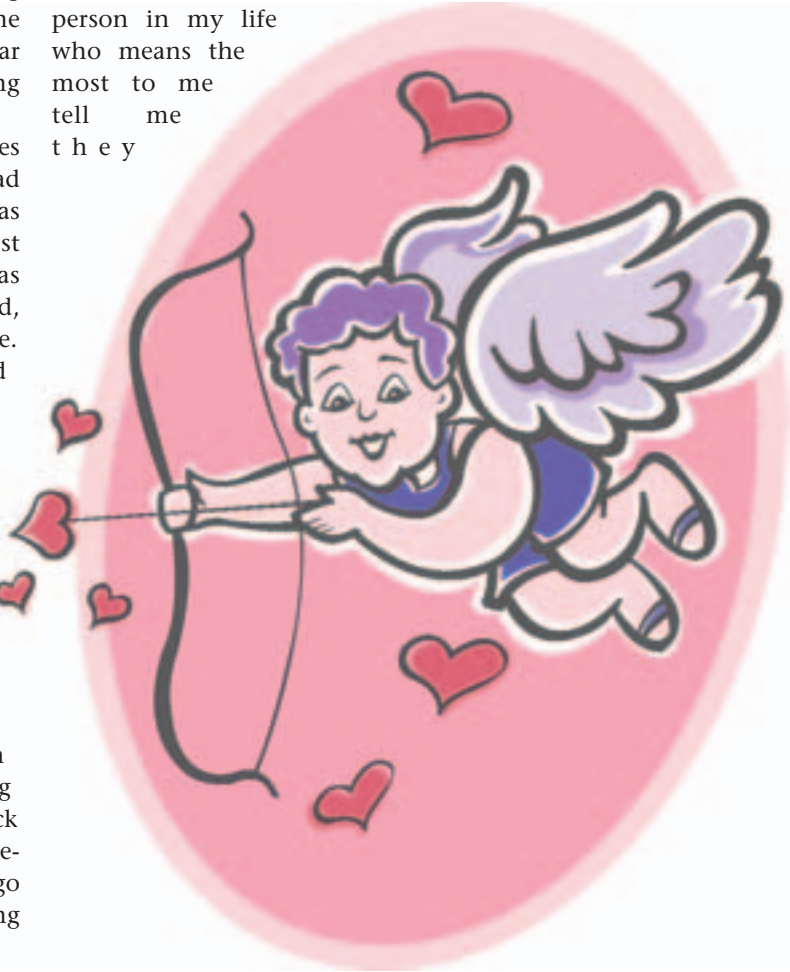
Cpl. Rick Nelson
Combat correspondent

With Valentines Day right around the corner, it's time for everyone to start considering who cupid's arrow is going to strike and what type of romantic lovey-dovey gift to get your loved one. I remember back in the old days, middle school, it was much easier to shop for the girl of your dreams. You'd go to the local K-Mart and buy a pack of Mickey Mouse Valentines cards, a heart-shaped box of chocolates, write something cheesy about love on a card, and you were as good as gold. The girl would brag to her girl

friends during gym class about her awesome boyfriend for getting the box of chocolates with more chocolate covered cherries than the rest of the girls. If things only stayed so simple! Then we grow up and things get a little more difficult and expensive. Girls start wanting things like jewelry (costing the vast majority of us a few car notes) and guys start wanting the newest gaming console. I wish a box of chocolates and a Goof Troop card still had the same value it did when I was 12, but unfortunately, like most holidays, Valentines Day has become commercialized, becoming a marketing scheme. It's basically a holiday created by the card companies. It seems like every year it gets a little bit harder to please your loved ones and come up with new ideas to surprise them, and I know there are some couples out there who actually get irritated when they don't get what they want on Valentines Day. How about on Feb. 14, instead of spending an arm and leg on Coach's new spring purse or Playstation's new Rock Band game, you create something from your heart or just go out of the way to do something nice for your loved one.

Take the day to think about all of the good memories you've had together, instead of all the good things you've bought each other. I'll be the first to admit I like getting gifts more than the next guy, but at the same time I'd much rather have the person in my life who means the most to me tell me t h e y

love me or do something from the heart than try to appease me and buy my love. Like the common cliché says "It's the thought that counts." Maybe we should all remember this as the 14th sneaks up.



A day of dreams



Lance Cpl. Alesha R. Guard

Colonel Mark A. Dungan, commanding officer, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, speaks about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Friday at a morning colors ceremony at the Flagpole in front of the Base Headquarters Building.

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — Scattered showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 80. East wind around 14 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40 percent.

Night — Scattered showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 70. East wind around 15 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40 percent.

High — 80

Low — 70

Saturday



Day — Scattered showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 80. East wind around 18 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40 percent.

Night — Scattered showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 69. East wind around 15 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40 percent.

High — 80

Low — 69

Sunday



Day — Scattered showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 75. East wind around 17 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40 percent.

Night — Scattered showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 70. East wind around 14 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40 percent.

High — 75

Low — 70



Photos by Lance Cpl. Brian A. Marion

Corporal Daniel Finur, squad leader, 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, fires a controlled pair at a target while Lance Cpl. Stephen Deluc, rifleman, 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 1/3, watches and prepares to guide him toward the next pallet during a training exercise at the Range Training Facility Tuesday.

Company turns exercise into competition

Lance Cpl. Brian A. Marion
Combat Correspondent

Marines stationed here participated in various team-based maneuvers Tuesday at the rifle range here to help familiarize themselves with their weapons and each other.

Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment finished the rifle range last week, and started working on shorter distances, between seven and 50 meters, Monday and Tuesday. The company also held a platoon competition Tuesday, and to make things more interesting the winning platoon was exempt from police calling the range grounds for the rest of the week.

"It's good cause they're changing up the normal training routine," said Cpl. Jimmy Hawkins, squad leader, Charlie Company, 1/3. "We are still training, but it's fun at the same time. It helps keep morale up, and it helps keep us motivated."

Charlie Company received new Marines from the Schools of Infantry, and the new Marines received their first exercises in the Fleet.

"We want to get our [new Marines] up to speed and help familiarize them with exercises like this one to help them fit in with the older Marines," said 1st Lt. Tim Kronjaeger, commander, Weapons Platoon, Charlie Company, 1/3. "To help with this, while one platoon is up front shooting in the competition, we have some of our senior Marines by the bleachers giving classes to the younger Marines."

The classes ranged from combat life saving, crew served weapons and gear classes, to Arabic language classes.

Several of the Marines learned to speak Arabic extremely well when they were over in Iraq, Kronjaeger said. The older Marines have plenty of knowledge, but some of them are getting out of the Corps.

Most of the senior Marines like to do the classes because they're able to pass on their knowledge to a younger generation.

As the competition continued through the afternoon, the platoons raced to get the fastest time and the most points while applying the fundamentals they learned.

The Marines had to run about 50 meters before coming to the first pallet where they had to fire a controlled pair, two separate shots in two separate sight pictures. They then moved closer to another pallet and fired a hammered pair, two shots in a close interval, followed by a single shot to the target's head in a failure-to-stop drill, within a one minute time limit.

"We came up with the one minute time limit from the [executive officer] and the [company gunnery sergeant] who ran the course first," Kronjaeger said. "Including reloading in the middle, they did it in 45 seconds."

The training is beneficial for new Marines, and gave older Marines a chance to get back into the swing of things.

"Monday was really the first day of training with the new Marines, and it was awesome," Hawkins said. "They were really motivated to do the training, and it gave the older Marines a chance to build back some muscle memory."

Throughout the training, Marines, old and young alike, learned how each other reacted and how to come together as platoons.

"This is the first [view] we got of the new Marines, and they still have to settle in their places," Hawkins said. "Our training moves a lot faster than other units, but with the training, they will settle in."

Marines echoed his satisfaction as the last platoon tried their hand on the course, while the others prepared for the night portion of their training.

"The competition was awesome," said Lance Cpl. Jesus Torres, team leader, 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 1/3.

"It gave the new Marines a chance to practice shooting with the weapons," he added. "The competition also brought motivation to the table and worked the platoons as a whole."



Corporal Jimmy Hawkins, squad leader, Charlie Company, 1/3, waits to start the platoon competitions at the rifle range here.



Finur, left, runs with Deluc toward the first pallet in the platoon competition Charlie Company held for their Marines at the Range Training Facility Tuesday. Several Marines stated the competition aspect brought something different to the training, which consisted of various team-based maneuvers.



Marines participating in the platoon exercises were accompanied by their fellow Marines clothed in orange safety vests. The Marines in safety vests are close to the end of active service.

Lending Locker sends movers packing

Christine Cabalo
Photojournalist

Service members due to move don't need to get boxed up spending funds for new household items.

The Lending Locker unlocks household goods to service members coming or leaving Marine Corps Base Hawaii. Basic linens, dishware and small appliances are free for the married or single to borrow. Since 1991, the locker is one of six core services all Relocation Assistance Program offices provide.

"Our Lending Locker items are solely for the transitional period," said Marie Calvo-Jesus, RAP manager, Marine Corps Community Services. "When you're coming to Hawaii you can borrow our items up until shortly after you receive your household goods. When you're leaving Marine Corps Base Hawaii you have up to 60 days before leaving the island to use our lending locker services."

Calvo-Jesus said service members or their spouse could make the mandatory appointment for visiting the locker. All a borrower needs is a copy of the service member's Permanent Change of Station orders to MCBH and a valid military ID card. Those living near Kaneohe Bay with orders to another station should go to that station's RAP office's locker, she said.

"There are dozens and dozens of some items," said Dana Mollet, RAP assistant, MCCS. "We do regular inventory and check to see if any of our items need replacing."

The program offers household goods in pre-packaged kits or as individual items. A small size kit is made to serve two people, and borrowers can loan out multiple items for larger families. Both Mollet and Calvo-Jesus said they invest in restaurant-grade items.

"A lot of people don't believe we have quality items," Calvo-Jesus said. "We've been complimented several times [by borrowers] that our items are better than their own personal items. We do frequent turnovers. They go through an accelerated usage since it's transferred from one person to another."



Photos by Christine Cabalo

Dana Mollet, assistant, Relocation Assistance Program, Marine Corps Community Services, winds an electrical cord around one of the Lending Locker's toasters. Mollet said many service members are surprised to hear the locker has small appliances, including coffee makers and irons.

The RAP manager said she's had some appointments this month, but the busiest time people use the service is from May to September. During the high traffic period, the office expands its locker service. Last summer, the wait for some families was almost two weeks.

"We had nothing on the shelf, because of the high volume of people coming to, as well as leaving, Hawaii," she said. "During those times we had to keep people on standby and tell them we're not expecting anything in."

Petty Officer 2nd Class Justin Holke, utilityman, Headquarters Battalion, and his family waited five days for items in May 2005 when

they moved to MCBH. The utilityman said the Lending Locker spared his savings, and he was glad his sponsor told him about the free service.

"If you're going to use the Lending Locker — make an appointment as soon as you can," Holke said. "You can time it so you can go right when you get on island. You don't have to wait."

People coming to MCBH should also visit the RAP office of their current base, Calvo-Jones said. The program's personnel can coordinate with service members, and they can help movers figure out what they need. Small cooking appliances and infant household goods are bigger

items families pack away that the Lending Locker provides, Mollet said.

"Microwaves are a very popular item," the RAP assistant said. "Some people have asked if we had vacuum cleaners and toaster ovens, but unfortunately we don't due to health issues and lack of space at the locker."

She said people can pair Base Thrift Store finds with the locker's items for a combination tough to crack. The store sells inexpensive items, such as trash bins, and movers

won't need to break the bank. Holke said the Lending Locker had many items he didn't expect they would, but lacked something he thought was essential.

"They didn't have any TVs," he said. "We made due for the time period, and the Lending Locker had a lot of other things in good condition. It helped to have good neighbors, and we became fast friends."

For more information about the Lending Locker, call the Relocation Assistance Program at 257-7790 or 257-7787.



Mollet checks a can opener at the Lending Locker. The locker contains household goods for service members to borrow.



Mollet arranges dishes for one of several kits at the Lending Locker. Mollet said everything on the locker's shelves is available in their kits.

Chaplains training to become warriors in struggle for influence

Cpl. R. Drew Hendricks
U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific

The Marine Corps' men of God gathered at their annual senior leadership symposium, the Ministry Leadership Conference, to discuss topics and gain practical knowledge in order to stay "Engaged to win the struggle for influence."

"We are focused on building dialogue with other nations, and are discussing and learning ways to build trust," said Rear Adm. Alan T. Baker, chaplain of the Marine Corps and deputy chief of chaplains. "Who better than the religious team to help build and mold the trust we are trying to communicate to the peoples of the world?"

According to the briefs given by the U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, G-5 Plans and Operations, 10 per-

cent of the people in the MarForPac area of responsibility hate the U.S. and want it completely destroyed. Another 10 percent love the U.S. and want to have its way of life. The other 80 percent are waiting to be swayed.

"It's that 80 percent we are focusing our influence on," said Col. Russell Smith, assistant chief of staff, G-5. "And we are only going to be an influence in Asia if we are out there amongst the people."

In order to ensure global security and American interests in the Asian-Pacific regions, the U.S. is striving to make a positive impact in the hearts and minds of the people, said Smith.

With this key point in mind, the Chaplains spent three days here discussing the best way to help the Marine Corps in its struggle for influence in the

MarForPac area of operations.

"This training will help us provide an impact and give the commanders the advice and support they need," said Navy Capt. Bill Reed, force chaplain, MarForPac. "This will also determine how we as chaplains and [religious program specialists] can make a greater impact on religious leaders to influence cooperation throughout the whole scope of operations."

The threat of anti-American and anti-democracy influence is a real-world issue according to the some leaders of MarForPac.

"The struggle for influence is just as important as the kinetic operations Marines are doing in Iraq and Afghanistan," Smith said.

Even now, other superpowers are flexing their diplomatic, military, information and especially economic power

throughout the world, Smith said.

Headlines from news outlets around the world support this claim:

- China flourishing in African vacuum: Finance Asia, Hong Kong, Jan 6, 2008

- China says Kenya violence proof Western democracy unsuitable: Globe and Mail, Canada, Jan 14, 2008

- China, India vow to build relationship of friendship, trust: NEWS Post India, India, Jan 14, 2008

Smith provided this and other information to the chaplains to help them better understand the Marine Corps' strategies and concerns for dealing with the prospect of our own impact and threat of outside influence.

"We want [the chaplains] to know about what we're doing out there in the struggle for influence," said Col. James L. Stalnaker, chief of staff, MarForPac. "We are not planning to make every chaplain a front line strategist, but we want to make them understand how great an impact they can make."

The conference also included briefings from Dr. Pauletta Otis, a professor of security studies at the Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, and Dr. Ehsan M. Ahrari, a professor of counterterrorism at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies.

These professionals shared their personal insight into the roles of religion, religious influence in democracy and in war and violence.

"The struggle for influence is directly related to the poli-

cy related to Islamic influence," Ahrari said.

"[Chaplains] are the military's early-warning system when concerned with religious violence," Otis said. "That is why [they] are invaluable. People will talk to [them] about the religious climate more than anyone else."

The chaplains will continue to learn from these outside sources and from each other through discussion and classes. According to Rear Adm. Baker, all the knowledge and experience they plan on gaining, they will take back to the rest of the chaplain corps in order to aid the Marine Corps in the continuing the struggle for influence.

"We as chaplains and RPs can have an impact on this AOR," Reed said. "We can affect hearts and minds and engage to win the struggle for influence."

Absentee voting registration is quick, easy

Christine Cabalo
Photojournalist

Choosing to serve in the armed forces doesn't mean service members lose their chance to vote.

Filling out a short form is all it takes for service members and their families to register to vote. In 2006, an estimated 975,000 people in Hawaii met voting age, yet only 52.7 percent voted, according to the Hawaii State Data Book's election reports.

"Many don't know how to vote or think that it's a complicated process," Capt. Peter Baker, voting assistance officer, Headquarters Battalion. "All you do is read over the issue, decide what to vote for and do it. I think that's what some people are afraid of. They're worried voting takes away time from other things, but it doesn't have to."

Baker said once someone fills out an absentee ballot request form, all that's left is to send it to their county's election clerk. The clerk sends those who register a mail-in ballot and any other election information other residents would receive. He said service members should fill out the form

each time they move or their information could get lost.

"Every time there's an election in your county, you'll get a booklet that lists all of the issues," he said. "Sometimes there'll be listings of candidates for each office."

The process is completely free for those who register, including sending in the form to their home state's election clerk. The captain said he tells everyone to register, even if they don't plan to vote, so they can find out what's happening in their home communities.

Baker said he and other voting assistance officers have heard some service members say they would rather spend time focusing on their military duties. Staff Sgt. Jesus Ramos, voting assistance officer, Headquarters and Service Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, said he thinks voting is an essential duty for everyone. He said voting-age family members, as well as those in the service, shouldn't throw away an opportunity to help support the military.

"The people running for office are those who decide on rules and regulations that directly effect the Marine Corps," Ramos

said. "The people who win will take away or give benefits to the armed services."

The staff sergeant said voting is an easy way to bring about positive changes to society. Those who think it doesn't matter whether they vote or not are wrong, Ramos said.

"If you don't care about voting, then you don't care about any of your benefits," he said. "You don't care about whether your family is cared for if anything happens to you or if you have to pay more for uniforms."

The Headquarters Battalion voting assistance officer said all service members can be role models, and it only takes one person to spark the interest to vote in others. Baker said it's sad to see Marines fight so hard for others to have voting rights yet shy away from their own country's election.

"Most Marines join the Corps because they want to make a difference in the world," Baker said. "What I tell them is killing bad guys is one way to make a difference, but voting is another way that's equally important."

For more information or to fill out an online form to register, log on to <http://www.fvap.gov/>.



Christine Cabalo
Captain Peter Baker, Service Company commander and voting assistance officer, Headquarters Battalion tapes a voting awareness sign. Baker said registering to vote is easy for service members and their families.

Who is your Voting Assistance Officer?

Each unit aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii has an officer or assistants who can offer more information about voter registration. Service members or their family members can also contact their unit's personnel or administration office for information.	Marine Aircraft Group 24 First Lt. Derek R. Sharp 257-0930
	Headquarters and Service Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific Staff Sgt. Jesus N. Ramos 477-8361

Base Installation Voting Assistance Officer:

Captain Tracy A. Maese
257-8813

Unit Voting Assistance Officers:

Headquarters Battalion
Captain Peter A. Baker
257-9963

Marine Corps Air Facility
Petty Officer 2nd Class
Michael M. Baptista
257-8429, ext. 239

3rd Marine Regiment
Second Lt. Christian R. Bialk
257-1068

3rd Radio Battalion
Second Lt. Ralia R. Bouska
257-1491

Combat Service Support Group 3
First Lt. Joseph R. Merritt
257-1558



Nebraska State Historical Society photo

Hanging out



Cpl. Scott M. Biscuiti

Soaring 250 feet above ground, Marines with the Reconnaissance and Sniper Platoons of Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, view the surrounding area during a special purpose insertion/extraction refresher Jan. 13 at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The Marines and Sailors of the 11th MEU are conducting sustainment training in Kuwait as part of their six-month deployment throughout the Western Pacific Ocean and Arabian Gulf Region.



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Corporal Jared W. Wagner, personal security detail, Jump Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, hands a piece of candy to an Iraqi child during Operation Northwestern Shoulder.

ODDS, from A-1

Aside from safety, Holiday feels the unit who inhabited the area before 1/3's arrival in March had a lot to do with the battalion's success. "The ground work 2/3 made during their stay in the Triad made the situation a lot better ...," added 32-year-old Holiday. Until the battalion returned in October, it seemed like an impossible feat to bring everyone home, Holiday said

Lance Cpl. Ezekiel D. Johnson,

rifleman, 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company, 1/3, said some people may think the battalion was able to accomplish this because they weren't leaving the wire. "That's about as far from the truth as it gets," Johnson said. "Bravo Company was constantly conducting mounted and dismounted patrols through Haditha, so our operations tempo had nothing to do with our success because it was as high as it could possibly be." "We accomplished something

that was unheard of during combat," he said. "Although I won't be there, the ground work has been laid for 1/3, so there's a good chance this feat will happen again during 1/3's next deployment later this year." The battalion who was once known for having the most Marines killed during the Battle of Fallujah, the bloodiest battle since Vietnam's Hue City, will now be known as the first battalion to return home intact—a feat the battalion hopes it'll accomplish again.



A Marine assigned to 1st Squad, 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, looks into the distance for anything that may harm the Marines in his squad.



Private First Class Jose A. Rodriguez, rifleman, Headhunter Squad, Charlie Company, 1/3, holds security for other Marines in his squad while they're in a house asking questions during a census patrol in Haqlaniyah, Iraq, June 15, 2007.

PROGRAM, from A-1

The VNP continues to follow Marines and Sailors outside of the Marine Corps and Navy, and helps identify resources, Moore said. If they need counseling, we help them find it. If they need their homes adapted to better suit them after their injuries, we help them get in touch with someone who can make the change. One of the biggest impacts the nurses come in contact with is traumatic brain injury, accounting for 70 to 80 percent of the injuries families deal with, Moore said. "Marines suffering from traumatic brain injuries

know something doesn't quite fit together like it used to, but they're afraid to seek help, because they think they might be kicked out," Moore said. "If families think their loved one isn't quite like they were when they left, they should seek help to find out what's wrong." It's important to realize people do change over there, Moore said. Sometimes the change is only in their perspective of the world. The visiting nurses also have the Combat Related Assistance Program set up for family members whose spouses are in a combat zone, but aren't injured yet.

"If a spouse is pregnant and her husband is in Iraq, we will keep in touch with her, because she will have more stress than usual," Moore said. For families who don't want a visit from a nurse, the program has plenty of written resources that can be mailed out instead. As of two weeks ago, the VNP followed 372 families through their difficulties, with referrals still coming in. The visiting nurses work from referrals, meaning they can't help a family unless someone refers a family. If family members want the visiting nurses to assist them, they can contact





Lance Cpl. Achilles Tsantarliotis

Sergeant Carlos Gonzalez, cook, Headquarters Battalion, finishes final preparations.

BEST, from A-1

muted rations. In the last quarter alone we made about \$91,000. That says a lot. Name me one place on this base, or this island, that you can eat a full, quality meal for \$4. You can't, unless you want a happy meal and I don't know many Marines who would consider that an option."

Yantosca insists a key factor in the success of the mess hall is the importance of noncommissioned officers leading Marines. Having them work alongside each other, teaching, guiding and working is something that builds new Marines into proficient food service specialists.

Small-unit leadership is the backbone of the Marine Corps, said Sgt. Kentrell Allen, food production manager, Combat Service Support Group 3. Being in the kitchen alongside them and guiding them, teaching them everything possible to be the most effective food service specialist they can be, is how Anderson Hall won again, he said.

"That's something we stress; the mess hall is where they learn the basics, and build from [military occupational school]. I think a big problem with the Marine Corps contracting civilians is losing focus," Yantosca said. "Having the Marines cook is how they learn their job and how they provide quality food, it's a team effort."

Yantosca boasts that even with a 90 per-

cent ratio of Fleet Assistance Program Marines employed at Anderson Hall and the demanding deployment rotation, they still maintain their proficiency and dedication to their job and patrons.

By empowering junior leadership, Anderson Hall not only became the best, but the most efficient dining facility. Being able to do the job, and well, wherever the Marines are, theater of war or garrison, Marines can rest assured they have a good meal waiting for them, Yantosca said.

"To be successful in any operation, you need your Marines to believe in the mission," Yantosca explained. "If I tell these Marines to take care of the fellow Marines and Sailors who live in the barracks and have nowhere else to go, they'll believe in it and why? Because that's our mission, not awards. And while its good to be recognized for our hard work, I prefer the service members' recognition."

Yantosca is not alone in seeking patron appreciation. The junior service members share his belief in the mission.

"I take a lot of pride in the food we make," said Lance Cpl. Destiney Taylor, food service specialist, Headquarters Battalion. "I look forward to seeing fellow Marines smiling and hearing their compliments."

With the best mess hall in the Marine Corps, service members should reconsider a meal that costs more and is unhealthy, when the option of a passionately made, healthy, low cost meal is always here.

HONOR, from A-1

great American, remember the ideals for which he fought, and recommit ourselves to ensuring that our country's promise extends to all Americans across this great land."

The president encouraged Americans to celebrate the day by acting kinder toward others and carrying out King's dream of equality for all.

"Our Nation has made progress toward realizing Dr. King's dream, yet the work to achieve liberty and justice for all is never-ending," Nicholson read. "My administration will continue to protect the rights won through the sacrifice of Dr. King and other civil rights leaders, and our country will never rest until equality is real, opportunity is universal, and all citizens are empowered to realize their dreams."

After the powerful reading of the presidential proclamation, Pfc. Travoski Lee, visiting airline specialist, Marine Corps Air Facility, put many attendees to tears by reciting King's "I Have a Dream" speech.

"When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir," Lee read. "This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Following Lee was the guest speaker Lt.Col. Brian Cavanaugh, commanding officer, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362. Cavanaugh told the Marines they should all feel very good about what they are doing for their nation and the opportunity they have to serve which was largely made possible by Dr. King.

" . . . It's important for us to

remember Dr. King put the United back into the United States, to remember that because we are united and through unity, there is no greater nation on this planet and for this reason alone we should always remember that Dr. King is the icon for our nation," Cavanaugh said.

Gunnery Sgt. Roland Hamilton, section chief, Marine Aircraft Group 24, was then called to make his way down the aisle with Cpl. Richard Oglesby, aviation meteorological equipment technician, MCAF, and Pfc. Stephan Barnes, aviation operations specialist, MCAF, to sing their rendition of "Chain Gang" together, inviting the crowd to join them.

"It was awesome to be able to sing in remembrance of him," Oglesby said. "It felt really good . . ."

A saxophone solo by Cpl. William Caban, weather observer, MarForPac, followed the trio. "Amazing Grace" resonated off the stained glass windows and doors of the Base Chapel. The song's lyrics

reflected Dr. King's hopes of racial blindness, "I once was lost, but now am found. Was blind, but now I see."

"And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!'" Lee recited.

The attendees of the ceremony weren't joined at the hand; however, they were joined in brotherhood. A brotherhood where any man or woman, despite color or religion, can join and fight together for the freedom of their country.

"Although an assassin cut his life short, he could not cut his dream short," said Col. Mark A. Dungan, commanding officer, Marine Corps Base Hawaii.



Lance Cpl. Alesha R. Guard

Private First Class Travoski J. Lee recites King's "I Have a Dream" speech for the crowd during the holiday observance in the Base Chapel, Friday.

AROUND THE CORPS

Iraqi, U.S. children meet with letters

Cpl. Bryce C.K. Muhlenberg
1st Marine Division

HABBANIYAH, IRAQ — Just four years ago, Capt. Brian Von Kraus, now commander of Headquarters and Support Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 6, was a platoon commander, fighting a kinetic war against insurgent forces in al Anbar, Iraq.

Serving in 2004 at the forefront of clandestine military operations, Von Kraus witnessed the worst of what the enemy could throw at a Marine unit. During one complex attack, initiated by insurgents, he led his Marines in three separate successful assaults on an enemy position. For his actions that day, he was awarded the Silver Star Medal, one of the Marine Corps’ highest awards for conspicuous gallantry, third only to the Congressional Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross.

Four years later, Von Kraus finds himself back in the al Anbar province, but this time he’s winning the war without firing a shot. He has once again come to the forefront of operations as the creator of “Operation Iraqi Pen Pal,” a letter exchange program bridging the gap between the young students of the local Iraqi schools here, and students of Boston and Maine public schools in the United States.

Operation Iraqi Pen Pal recently completed its first

transfer of more than 70 letters from Iraqi children to multiple U.S. schools, who in turn provided more than 100 responses that were handed out to Iraqi children by Von Kraus himself.

“The Americans, all they see is bad news; bombs, crimes, all of this,” said the 29-year-old, Boston, native, standing amongst a throng of local youth while he handed out another batch of American letters. “With the pen pals, American kids can talk to Iraqi kids and see the reality of the good stuff and see how similar they really are to the children over here in Iraq. I’m sure we all have common misconceptions and I hope this can clear some of that up.”

The program’s initial stages started late September with just a couple of e-mails and some help from his family, said Von Kraus.

“I got the idea from the adjutant, who was starting a similar project,” he said. “I also got an e-mail from my mother the same day. So, I started e-mailing some schools back home and my mother started working the network down there, getting in contact with schools.”

Eventually the program proved to be a popular idea in the United States and it was put on a type of Boston public schools bulletin. People started calling Von Kraus, asking how they can get involved. Since then, the letters continued to flow in from the States.



Cpl. Bryce C.K. Muhlenberg

Postcards and letters cover Von Kraus desk as part of Operation Iraqi Pen Pal, a letter exchange program bridging the gap between the young students of Iraqi schools and students in Boston and Maine.

According to Jasam Mouhame Idan, the 37-year-old Assistant Manager of the Arfwan girls school here, he couldn’t be happier.

“This is the first time I have heard of a program like this, and it is great,” said the tall, Habbaniyah, Iraq, native. “And it is a very good idea because these students can make friends in the United States and other countries, and it lets them know that we are not bad people. We are good. We like this idea because we see that your people want to know what is going on in our country.”

The letters come from all over Boston along with a few other schools in Maine, which included postcards with different photos showing America and its way of life, said Von Kraus. He also commented on how unique the experience has been for

the children on both ends.

“One cool thing about when the Iraqi kids get these letters and postcards is they realized that they are noticed by American kids and they write back with their own letters and photos,” said Von Kraus. “I think these kids have no idea what to make of it. There are photos of American girls playing soccer and having class and doing everything together with the guys. There are pictures of the kids sledding, skiing, going to the movies, swimming and some of this blows the Iraqi kids’ minds. The stuff we take for granted, they don’t get to do over here in Iraq, but I think Iraqi kids respond really well to the letters.”

But this type of operation probably wouldn’t have been a possibility years ago when Von Kraus was with his previous unit, said Idan.

“There was a time when there was much fighting here,” said Idan. “The terrorists made us scared; the children could not go to school and it was not safe. Now it is safe again and we can grow.”

Von Kraus, who is on his third deployment to Iraq and fifth deployment since he became a Marine, backs up Idan’s statement by describing his time in Iraq.

“The biggest difference between my previous deployments to Iraq and this one is that on my last one, everybody was worried about surviving IED attacks, fire fights...both civilian and military had this worry. And unfortunately, more often than not, the attacks killed civilians,” said Von Kraus. “On this deployment, they have gone beyond that. I look around me here, and they are out in the open building a school. Back then, security was a lot worse. We patrolled everyday and something always happened, always an ambush or a fight. It was good and bad. It felt like cutting weeds; you cut it and it just grows right back. Now, we see progress, it is quiet now and it’s becoming a normal country, people can go to school.”

And that’s what children have been able to do since the “Ready to Fight” battalion arrived in late July. There has been a great resurgence of local security, safety and progress in an area once dubbed the “wild west” of

Iraq. This security has allowed Iraqis to begin training as Iraqi security personnel, which allows other Iraqis to go about their lives and start re-building their country in a safe environment.

“It is amazing how many Iraqis you see out here taking charge now, which allows us to do great stuff like this.”

The program is a great success, said Idan, and for more than one reason.

“I also think that when kids see the U.S. forces, some wave, but some are scared,” he said. “It’s going to also help kids understand more about the Marines, because some of them have heard bad things from insurgents, who have said the American forces are bad guys. I think this program will let them know how Americans really are.”

“I really think it is good for both countries and hopefully we can make this possible across every unit here in Anbar,” said Von Kraus. “I hope to pass it up to the Regimental Combat Team level and push it out to other battalions and out to as many schools as possible. I would love to see them carry this one and I think it will be good if they do.”

Four years ago, Von Kraus and his Marines successfully defeated their enemy using fire and maneuver; but now, as Von Kraus has shown, Marines can use other approaches to counter insurgency operations in the modern fight against terrorism.